

Valley Women's Voice

Exposure

story and photos © Cate Rowen

Developing film in the bathroom in my apartment in Hillsdale, New York; fog, snow, rocks and bare trees make up a roll of thirty-six exposures. John, my boyfriend, has asked me to go to New Mexico with him for a week. A desert landscape filled with brown faces will give me a fresh view. In February in the Berkshires, it's hard to love winter enough to photograph it. I sit and roll canisters of film to take along, placing them carefully in a black plastic bag, estimating number of exposures per day in New Mexico, even before I pack my clothes. John wants to see Indian land, to relate some experience to his readings on their struggles. I will take pictures for a photography class. We are both trying to see something new, something real. Beyond the cliffs of Abiquiu.

We begin our trip as tourists. We ride on a plane, we rent a car. We buy Navajo rugs, made in Juarez. In Albuquerque, Anglo friends show us the flea market, the best Mexican restaurants. *Something feels odd. There has been no change. We leave the city ready to find what we came for.*

Santa Fe, the Plaza: Indian women surrounded by authentic jewelry. They know the story, they pay the City for the piece of sidewalk where they sell their authentic jewelry to fat anglos from everywhere. The whites in the stores have prices far higher. Those stores are jammed. They accept American Express. Disneyland. Navajoland. Hopiland. Puebloland. Colonialland. Frontierland. Southaficaland.

I heard once that it gets so hot in those Mickey Mouse costumes that you can barely breathe. How does it feel to sit on the sidewalk in Santa Fe, a tourist attraction, yourself?

We left Santa Fe quickly, running into the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Found a church reported to have water that cured any disease just by bathing in it. Our bodies were sound but we looked for the fountain. We wandered around a deserted courtyard. No water. Must be inside the church. The church is locked. Maybe Taos will be better. We keep running.

"The Taos Pueblo is closed for the day."

"Northampton is closed for the day."

"Concord is closed for the day"

What is this reality? The white man at the gas station tsks at our bad luck. Too bad. Where else are we going? We're going to Los Alamos now. Birthplace of the nuclear bomb. Home of the best public high school in New Mexico. Anglo children are bussed thirty miles from Santa Fe to learn science and math.

The town stands on high mesas.

Between them are the labs. The "Historical Markers" placed along the road to commemorate battles and settlements are replaced here by signs warning of land mines. There are towers housing machine guns. I heard that if you try to sneak into the labs at night, guard will shoot you. We drive past the labs at 5 p.m. There are Indian women carrying plastic bags, wearing brightly colored security tags pinned to polyester blouses. They are waiting for a bus. To where?

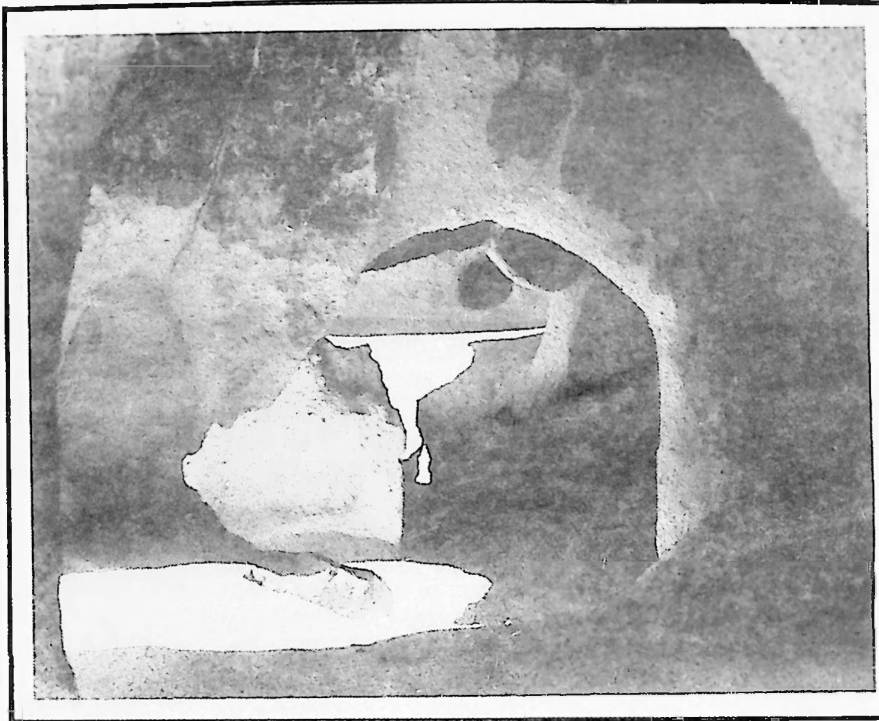
As we drive away toward Bandelier we see the warnings of land mines less frequently. Are there less mines or less signs or less secrets as you climb the Jemez mountains? Two years after I return to the East I learn that these mountains are strip mined for pumice to make stone washed jeans. Casual chic, matches turquoise necklace. The necklace was a gift from boyfriend, brought to New Mexico, not worn there.

Bandelier is an Anasazi ruin, named after a white man who found it. National Monument, closes at dusk. We saw deer there. They were tame.

I took one of my best photographs at Bandelier. It's syonic, I decided. Organic shapes, varying values of gray, white and black. My photography professor did not know which way was up. He gave me an A. There were no straight lines. The sunlight reaches partway into the caves, but the picture implies dark recesses fading into black. I cannot look at the photo except right side up. I was there, and I know how far back the caves go. They are man-made. They are organic shapes. They are not square.

The pamphlet distributed by the Forest Service says that no one knows why the Anasazi left. I want to know if they asked. Who would they ask?

Our rental car is on a dirt road in springtime. Dirt is a figure of speech. I preside behind the wheel, proud of my expertise at driving in deep mud, not getting stuck. We are in western New Mexico, headed for the Navajo reservation. I don't know if we should be scared to get stuck here. Up ahead is an RV, wheels half buried in mud. The going has been slow and we are behind a beat up Toyota with Colorado plates. They know how to drive in this too. They find a relatively solid place to stop and we pull up behind them. I get out, John stays in the car. There are four men who have



emerged from the Toyota, from Mexico, from Colorado. They habla in Espanol. I talk to them in English. We joke under our breath about the tourists in the RV as we push, shin deep in mud, the rear wheels spraying us as they spin. I am grateful for the New Mexico plates on the rental car, for front wheel drive. I have made a connection with these men, they like me, I am tough in my Levis and boots and flannel shirt. I push and they don't tell me to stop. When we used to get stuck in the snow at home, the men would take the bumper. I always ended up wasting my energy on the fender or stepping aside, feeling useless. Now I am giving directions to the driver of the RV, "turn the wheel a little...gas...ok now try reverse." Finally they inch their way out of the mud, onto drier ground. The woman has been thanking me over and over, and they just drive away. Maybe they heard Spanish being spoken from their window. They do not stop to thank the men from the Toyota from Colorado from Mexico. Now we are stuck, the trick in mud is to keep moving and we have been sinking for fifteen minutes. I help push them out and get myself out without a push. I feel like an expert, like a native, like a macho for the rest of the drive. But we are still running. Brief absolution found in deep mud. Too heavy to wash me.

Dark highway, pavement, open space. We are nearer to Arizona now, nearer to the reservation. A gas station and convenience store. Something happened there. I met someone who was nice to me for no reason—every reason not to be. Everyone there paid in food stamps. There was no sign indicating whose land this was. In the southwest there is land that no one owns but the federal government. I find that hard to grasp. I can barely remember the woman who talked to me, asked me where I came from. She had a child. She had food stamps. She walked to her truck, I walked to my car.

She wished me a good trip. I did not need to tell her I was not from there. I hate that I do not remember her face. It was dark. It was brief. I was tired. Today I wonder if I dreamed it.

There are men hitchhiking. We were not informed that we had entered the reservation; here there are schools that are trailers. We drive them to where they are going. We were going the wrong direction and they tell us the right way. February in New Mexico has been mild, but is cold on the reservation.

Canyon de Chelly, another Anasazi ruin, is real. It does not come to you with historical markers and signs pointing the way. It is not centrally located. It's just there. Our directions from the hitchhikers told us only the road. I expected some greeting. I didn't think we were there yet when we got there because it was empty, no people. Why would there be people at a ruin? Isn't that why we were looking at it?

There were no guard rails to keep you from falling in. I thought I was going to, the wind was so strong. If you look down you can see more ruins. These are not named after a white man and no one tells you the correct pronunciation. I take no pictures here. My flannel shirt and jeans and boots are no longer enough. For the cold, I mean. I hide in the rental car.

We keep driving. There is a place to rent horses but no one is there. There is a round house, a Hogan. We don't knock on the door.

A resort. It seems deserted. No other white people there. Employees talking in continued on page 6

Inside

- Fiction
- Poetry
- Dykes to Watch Out for
- Announcements
- Much More

Credits

Mary Drews
Rhys Eppich
Sharon Herbert
Carol McMaster
Camille Pansewicz
Joanne Quirk
Cate Rowen
Deirdre Smith

Letter to the Community

You may be wondering why this issue of the VVV happens to be eight pages instead of the usual twelve. In fact, so are we. Perhaps due to summer being the off-season in the area, we have had fewer than usual submissions and definitely fewer women working on the paper. We decided to cut the length in order to produce a fabulous paper according to our original schedule and still have a chance to escape our sweltering, windowless office for a few hours and see the sun.

As well as working on the summer issue, we've been involved in several projects code-named "Irons in the Fire". Our advertising contracts have been to-

tally re-vamped with many thanks to Camille for a terrific job. The new contracts are part of a media packet which will be sent out in August. We have also been working on an ad drive and recruitment drive for the fall so that the paper can expand.

Speaking of expanding, we would love to have submissions from the community for the first fall issue (deadline August 12, 1991), especially articles covering events you've attended such as concerts, protests, panel discussions, conferences, rallies, etc. Give us a call if you're interested in covering an event and have questions, concerns or ideas that you'd like to discuss. For those of

you who may have called to no avail in the past, please try again. We're hoping for an influx of women in the fall to help share the workload that is presently resting upon the shoulders of a weary yet determined few. If that sounds like a hint, it is.

We're pleased to present the 1991 Summer Issue for your pondering and enjoyment. We look forward to an energized and passionate fall full of possibilities. Stick around, the fire's just getting going.

P.S. Congratulations to Cate and Sharon on their graduation and warmest wishes for the future!

Call for Submissions to Asian Lesbian Anthology

Dear Friends,

I am writing to let you know about an anthology of writings and artwork by Asian/Pacific lesbians that is being compiled by Anne Mi Ok Bruining of the Asian Lesbians of the East Coast (ALOE) and myself.

When we say Asian, we mean South, Southeast and East Asian. The genres are poetry, essays, short stories, autobiography, and any artwork that can be reproduced in a book. We had decided to limit this anthology to work by Asian/Pacific-American lesbians because we feel that an international anthology is beyond our capability at this point and we do not want to (mis)represent anyone. However, I would welcome any submissions from Asian/Pacific lesbians throughout the world. The deadline is 15 December, 1991, and submissions should be sent to:

Anne Mi Ok Bruining
41 Shaw Road
Little Compton, RI 02837
USA

Yours in struggle,
Sharon Lim-Hing
Alliance of Massachusetts Asian Lesbians and Gay Men (AMALGM)

This letter appeared in Shamakami, Forum for South Asian Feminist Lesbians and Bisexuals, June 1991 Vol. II, No. 2.

The *Valley Women's Voice*, a monthly feminist newsjournal, welcomes women's writings, poetry, graphics, and photography that reflect a feminist commitment to the empowerment of all women. We aim to communicate and strengthen bonds between women by making them visible in our pages.

The *Valley Women's Voice* is produced on a collective, consensus, volunteer basis by a group of feminists. We often do not agree with all opinions expressed in the *Voice* by individual authors, but we accept responsibility for choosing to print everything in the paper.

We view the *Voice* as an ongoing opportunity for all of us—readers and collective members—to learn more about ourselves, each other, and the many truths of feminism.

CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

The *Valley Women's Voice* welcomes letters, essays, narratives, interviews, newsbriefs, poems, short stories, cartoons, graphics, and photographs. Written submissions should be 3 to 5 pages typed, double spaced. Your name, ad-

Policy Statement

dress, and phone number must be enclosed with all materials so that we may verify submissions and/or contact you to discuss any necessary editorial changes. A short biographical statement is also appreciated. An author who does not wish her name to be printed should indicate this when submitting items. Please enclose a SASE if you would like materials returned to you. The decision to print materials is made collectively, and all major editorial changes are made in conjunction with the author. However, we reserve the right to make minor editorial corrections to submissions for purposes of clarity and space constraints. Although we cannot afford to pay contributors, we do send a complimentary copy of the issue in which your item appears.

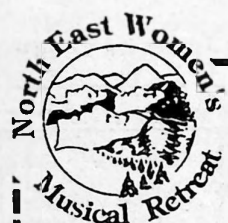
Send submissions to: *Valley Women's Voice*, 321 Student Union Building, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. If you have ideas for future articles, or are not sure how your particular interests and talents may add to the paper, call us at (413)545-2436.

CALENDAR & ANNOUNCEMENT LISTINGS

The *Valley Women's Voice* prints announcements and publicizes events of interest to women. Listings are free and should be kept to 5 lines in length. (Items will be edited to fit space constraints.) Announcements for non-profit organizations will be given preference and additional space when it is available.

Calendar listings should provide the following information: name, date, time, and location of the event; cost of attending the event (sliding scale? work exchange?); the sponsor of the event and recipient of proceeds, if any; a statement about accessibility for disabled women (wheelchair accessible? ASL interpreted?); and a phone number for inquiries.

Individuals and organizations may request that a photograph be printed along with a Calendar listing. A nominal fee is charged to cover printing costs. Only black-and-white photographs can be accepted. Due to space constraints, we may not be able to accept all photographs for publication, and preference will be given to non-profit organizations.



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Science Lesson ∞ "A Lie is a seed that sticks in your gut..." ∞

by Dianne Monroe

Cora's neighbor, Vivian, did not believe in electricity. Nor did she believe man had gone to the moon. According to her, all that mess was just another way for the white man to mess with your mind and take your money.

A lot of people might have considered her just ignorant. In fact, at first I considered her rather quaint. Or somewhat exotic. Kind of like an unusual flower. Or an endangered species. That was until I learned why Cora didn't allow her children to eat any of the seeds in their fruit.

It was the fall of 1969, a heady time of reckless, naive optimism. Jim Crow was gone. But then so was Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Medgar Evers, Viloa De Luizzo and Goodman, Schwerner and Chaney. At the time a lot of us thought that "if you don't push it, it won't fall," and all we had to do was continue pushing.

I had signed up with a program to tutor "underprivileged" children in Birmingham, Alabama. Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon I came to the tiny, boxed-in apartment of Cora Lee Williams in Southtown Projects to labor over grade school homework with her two daughters and any other neighborhood children who happened to stop by.

When we finished, after books and papers had been picked up, the living room straightened, and the tangle of neighborhood kids shooed back outside into the muddy courtyard to play, Cora rewarded her girls for their diligence with an orange.

With an extravagance that bordered on ceremony, Dora, the oldest, placed a knife and saucer on the kitchen table. Nicey, the youngest, got two

oranges out of the refrigerator. Cora sliced the oranges in half and watched, eagle-eyed, while the girls carefully scraped the seeds from the orange into the saucer. When she was satisfied that every seed lay in the saucer, she nodded. The two girls dashed out the door to play, the orange halves glittering like captured sunshine in their hands.

Cora would then pull out from her refrigerator two bottled Cokes. One she handed to me. Into hers she always poured the contents of one small package of Tom's salted peanuts.

Occasionally she served Luizanne coffee. With the same touch of ceremony, she poured hot water over the instant crystals. We each added Pet evaporated milk and heaping spoonfuls of sugar.

Then we would talk. About the latest anti-war demonstration I had attended. Or about the union organizing committee she had joined, down at the hospital where she worked. But what I liked best was when she told me her stories. About growing up one of nine children of a sharecropper in Picken's County. Or how she had taken part in the infamous demonstrations that had broken Jim Crow's back in what was known as the most segregated city in the south.

I was curious about the unique ritual of the scraping of the orange seeds onto the saucer, but never got up the courage to inquire as to its origins.

Then one day when Cora had to work late, I brought some grapes to share with the girls.

"Do they have seeds?" asked Dora, always the timid one.

"Mama don't let us eat no seeds," Nicey offered in explanation.

"Ain't you 'fraid to eat seeds?" Dora asked.

"She ain't 'fraid of nothing," Nicey proclaimed admiringly.

"Why should I be afraid of eating some seeds?" I asked, "They can't hurt me."

"Uh-huh," said Dora, "Uncle Fred, that's Mama's little brother that we never knowed, he died from swallowing a watermelon seed that stuck in his stomach and growed there till it killed him."

"What?!" I said, "could you run that past me again?"

Nicey darted into the bedroom and came back carrying an oversize family album. It's edges were frayed from the touch of many hands.

"Nicey, you know Mama don't 'low us to play with her good pictures when she ain't here," Dora hissed.

Nicey cut her eyes at her sister and opened the book very carefully to one sepia-toned picture. She pointed her stubby finger at the yellowed snapshot, as if it offered proof.

"Here. This is our Uncle Fred that we never knowed. He died when he wasn't no bigger than Dora is now. Mama tell us the story lotsa times. Say he was her favorite."

In bits and pieces the story tumbled out from the children's mouths, jumbled but crystal clear.

When Fred was about eight, he came down with stomach cramps. In spite of all home remedies

known, the pain worsened and he burned with fever. Sharecroppers almost never took their children to doctors, but Cora's mother and father decided that everything possible must be done for their son. So they gathered up all the money they had in the world. The boy was placed on a pallet in the back of the wagon for the long trip to town. Cora, then twelve, was chosen to ride along. Her family's life savings was knotted into a kerchief and tucked between her just-beginning breasts. Her brother's fevered head rested in her lap.

There was only one doctor in town. His office had two waiting rooms. No one in the "colored" waiting room was seen until the "white only" waiting room was empty. By that time the boy was dead, although they had thought he was finally sleeping, his head still resting on Cora Lee's lap.

The doctor told Cora's father that the boy had died of a watermelon seed he had swallowed, that had started to grow in his stomach. For this information, he took the money Cora carried between her new breasts.

After that, on the rare occasions that Cora's parents were able to give their children fruit, a

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So It Goes

presents: "A Dyke without a Banner"

by Karen Favreau

On the morning of the big Pride March, Karen comes to a horrible realization...



You're welcome to ride with my "Dykes On Bikes" group.



"Amazons Against Oppressive Clothing" are marching topless with little triangle stickers on our nipples... Want to join us?



Want to march with the "Militant, Meatless" gang?



Should I tell her that I saw you eating a BIG MAC yesterday?



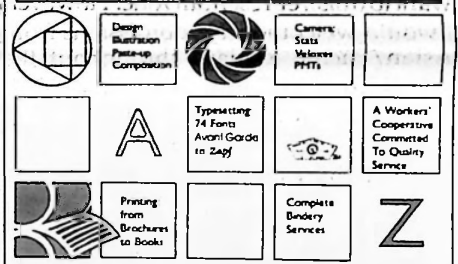
That day at the march...



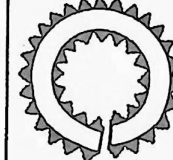
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To Escape is the Only Real Choice

by Jade Murray (a pen name for a local writer)

My friend Denise (Neicy) and I were about 13 years old. We decide to go walking around the neighborhood after an ill-fated attempt at homework. It is about 6:00 pm as we walk through empty lots, and rundown houses, seeing and feeling a lack of life here. Naturally, we resort to our normal routine of escaping - talking about the Hollywood stars and fantasizing of the day we reach 18 years old when we'll both head out for that place of fame, Hollywood, California.

"Child, did you see last week's episode of 'Starsky & Hutch'?" Neicy asked.

"Uhhm, Child, Starsky looked so fine!" I said.

"Naw uh, Girl, Hutch is finer than Starsky," she argues.

"I tell you what," she starts to preach, "You better not change your mind next week telling me you want Hutch."

"Forget you, Child, you can have Hutch all to yourself. Besides Starsky's my main man, why would I want your man?" I reassure her.

We walk in silence for awhile as we daydream about our big day. We have every hope that we will meet and marry the duo when we make our move to Hollywood. It is illogical for us to conceive the possibility that the two famous white guys are already married - probably to white women.

A car pulls up along side us. It is two of our older brothers' friends, Mark G., and Richard something.

"Would you two fine girls like a ride?" Mark asks.

"Naw, we are just as fine walking," I retort.

We ignore them for about a minute and then decide to get in the car. We attempt to get in the back seat together only to be ordered to sit separately. We are still oblivious to our fate and their motives. During the drive, Neicy and I talk about Hollywood, actors, and the like. Getting fed up with our yakking, Richard yells, "That's what's wrong with you foolish black girls - you always talking about white boys!" We continue our conversation as if we hadn't heard anything.

The car finally stops - we are out 'in the country', an infamous place where teenaged boys take girls and force them into sex. Neicy looks scared and I'm frightened, but pissed off. Richard, the

driver, turns to me with his eyes undressing me and informs us, "You girls have to choose one of the three 'F's': (1) FUCK, (2) FIGHT, or (3) FOOT IT!"

"FIGHT NEICY, FIGHT!!!!!!!" I yell and start kicking and hitting Richard with all my might. He can't get to me as he would like due to the steering wheel. I kick him each time he moves toward me. I look in the back seat at Neicy and Mark. He is all over her. I hear her scream, "He's taking off my panties and shorts, Help!" I yell to her, "Kick him in that place, Neicy, kick him hard in his thang!" In between fighting the guy in the front seat, I swing at Mark in the back seat, hitting him in his head. The car is rocking but not as a result of sex as the two guys had hoped. My arms and legs are tired, but I will not give in - we'll fight them

continued on page 7

On A Positive Note...

by Rhys A. Eppich

In her latest release, Amy Grant has achieved what some critics call "crossover success." "Heart In Motion" maybe a "crossover" album from Christian Contemporary Music into mainstream pop, but it is far from taking a leap of faith into uncharted waters. Rather, it can be seen as the next step from a progression of albums that has, over the years, led to the crossroads of pop.

Although at times she and her music have been criticized by at least two extremes as "she's not 'hip' enough" or "it's not 'Christian' enough," her music has not only weathered the storms, but come out shining—and "Heart In Motion" is no exception to this rule. Set to varying "dance" rhythms, accompanying synthesizers, horns, guitars, and vocals, "Heart In Motion" is an upbeat "rock poppin'" album with enjoyable lyrics.

Grant has written or cowritten about 70% of the songs she sings, and although the music styles have varied over the years (and throughout each album), she has consistently interwoven humor and melody, frustration and compassion, anger and healing, with instruments and styles that not only compliment the lyrics, but are fun to listen to, sing along with, and dance to. It's refreshing to listen to "love songs" that differ from the "bump

and grind theory." For example: in "Every Heartbeat" she sings, "You're not asking for the world/ I'm not asking for perfection/ Just a love that's well designed/ For passing the test of time..." and in "Good For Me," "When I start to sing the blues/ You pull out my dancing shoes/... You get brave when I get shy/ Just another reason why/ I think you could be so good for me..."

An appealing aspect of Amy Grant's music to me has always been the faith about which she sings—not so much as *how* it is defined (ie. in terms of "Christianity" or any hierarchical structure of "spirituality") but *how* it plays such an integral role of "surviving everyday life." How faith can do more than just get us through the day—how it is one way that can help us enjoy and love living life even, and especially, when it seems hardest to do so. "You're Not Alone" looks at life and love and finds a message of strength: "Through all these shattered emotion/ There's a lesson to learn/ So come on let me hold you close because/ Love can soothe what love has burned/ You've got to remember/ You're not alone in this world..."

Another song from "Heart In Motion" is "Hats" in which she sings "One day I'm a mother/ One day I'm a lover/ What am I supposed to do?/ HATS!..." The lyrics are fun and enjoyable, set to a

driving rhythm and great horns, but they also reflect a reality in which so many women live. She also sings a song about a friend who was sexually abused as a child. "Ask Me" opens up this sensitive—and all too realistic situation—in a couple of ways, first by asking how (her) God, faith, and the (often absurd) reality in which we all live can all make sense and exist together. In her words, "Ask me if I think there's a God up in the heaven/ Where did He go in the middle of her shame?/ Ask me if I think there's a God up in the heavens/ I see no mercy and no one down here's naming names..." And second, while the conclusions may not be "complete" or address all facets of sex abuse, the song enables a wider audience (in mainstream) to look at this issue from another view. The album cover also lists a nationwide number—18004ACHILD—to access help for people who've been abused.

It troubles me that I do not know Amy Grant's political beliefs, and therefore cannot, with any certainty, pass onto you how and to what degree that might affect her intentions; that in times of my highest doubt, the most open and liberal interpretations (of her music) may only be illusions at best. But I do know that one reason she started writing songs was because she "didn't want to impose [her] religion on anyone" (Millard, Bob. Amy Grant. Doubleday & Co., Inc. New York, 1986.

p.169) and that her flexibility of lyrics allows and encourages the listener to draw her own conclusions and interpretations.

My conclusion is that Amy Grant is a woman who sings of human nature and the ironies that so often plague us; of the love and strength we have and can give each other; and of faith—and often times humor—that enables us to focus on the positive things in life which are sometimes too easy to forget. "Heart In Motion" offers a combination of words and notes, of thoughts and pop, that may "strike a chord" for you. I think it's fair to say (albeit "corny") that Amy Grant dances to her own drum and sings on a positive note.

With this in mind, I leave you with a quote from "How Can We See That Far?" "The same sun that melts the wax can harden clay And the same rain that drowns the rat will grow the hay And the mighty wind that knocks us down If we lean into it Will drive our fears away..."

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and a study of fingers
all here forcing till dawn
the lesson of my gown.

For now, this pillow to exhort me.

Vesper! I feel winter and yet
with eyes shut yellow tight
the feeling is a stone
somewhere in me added.

First, though,
I wanted to be a bride,
for all to see,
altered
to exotic white.
—Emily Pestana
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Woman

Understand this:
I am no lady
of the evening—
I do not drink blood.

But each day I rise
by magic and want
all that I cannot have.
—Mary R. Drews
Huntington Station, New York

Lovers

Remember the story of Abbess Renda and Sister Felice?
They were nobodies and time's fools.
Tabernacle, tabernacle
and breasts to each other,
confirmed, as if standing
straight before God.

Loss and the cross—
that's what we say now,
but no robed girls there
where I must tell you nightly
their mud names—
Renda and Felice who touched
what appeared to be
each other's detrimental good.
Fallen names, caught for the cost.

Ember names, I put my hand,
put my hand
in the air and love
the girls' eye-shut skeletons
lodged in my window
at one thru three a.m.
But I should, shouldn't I?, hate
their Halloween bone finger kisses.
—Emily Pestana
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Leave a Message at the Tone

Needing to talk to you
(and more desperately as
the day wore thin) I called
four times on the phone
to no avail

So I made a valiant effort
to revive a conversation
I had begun some years ago
with myself, a person
(in my estimation) of
wit and intelligence and charm

But that, of course, was
years ago, and myself and I—
we are as strangers, having
so little to say to one another
about real things: love
and hate and death and wisdom.
The conversation grew strained
was a failure, I looked at my
watch and out the window, amidst
the hems and haws, dreading
the not too distant moment when
I would find myself discussing
the weather.
—Anne Britting Oleson
Dixmont, Maine

Winter House

Winter builds my house of isolation
Far beyond the horizon line
On a tundra—cold and foreign
Where no coat is warm enough
And worse—no one speaks the language
My hours are spent at the window
Waiting for some sign of life
Some sign that I still exist
I send out contact calls
To no one in particular
Like a frustrated house cat
Yearning for the other side of the screen
—Michele Casey
Lakeview, Ohio

The Surgery

Your head moves between my thighs,
an awful doctor.

Unrelenting fingers shame the wound,
bleeding colorlessly into the sheet.

My wet heart beats against the ceiling while,
scrubbed clean behind white blinds, unblinking,
the window witnesses.
—Rachel Moore
Kent, Washington

Female Anatomy

Delicate feminine shoes,
Strong support, fashionable,
Trim petite feet
Bend to narrow ankles
Nylon smooth calves
Singularly slender glide toward
Flowered hemline,
Discretely one-and-one-half inch
Below knees;
Flaring skirt gathers to
Tightly bound waist,
Smoothly denying repeated
Swells of motherhood;
Gentle petals dance across bosoms
Once adored, revered, now captive
In unyielding broadcloth erectness;
Hands quiet at each side,
Never clenched, always open
Supplication, whiteness like
Feathers floating toward
Face with rose-blood lips and
Green-grey eyes silent staring
Upward, inward, searching
For the bullet in her brain.

—Brenda Mayer
Coralville, Iowa

Rape

You, me and
he, she, it.
We are one.
You and I.
Two makes three.

But I am
One.
You are too
powerful,
in your male
skin, for me.

I am scared.
—Korrie Everett
Stony Brook, New York

shadow dancing

before The Divorce
twisting shadows on gray walls
created death visions
for sleepless eyes
and she saw him
face down in gravel and vomit
or drunk, falling down
stairs
to death
she waited. . . and hoped
until the shadows danced into murderous shapes

she moved away
from his knotted fist
realigning her jaw,
away from shadow dancers
because the bars on her windows
were thick as jail cells

the moon waned, and the shadows gaped hungry
until even the roaches left
and she trudged
chicks under wing
to the Department of Human Suffering
where sharp questions shredded her life
until "Services" were rendered. . .
she was "Jezebel"
disobedient wife
not to be trusted with real money
and the knives in her drawers gleamed
with promises unfulfilled

the shadows danced a dream
where she played the part of a widow
respected, Socially Secure, trusted
but still, he did not die
and her visions danced across gray walls
shadow suicides.
—Mae Stephens
Norman, Oklahoma

*Benedetta Carlini, visionary, and abbess of the Theatine Convent, known as Holy Mary of Tuscany, was charged with performing "immodest acts." At the age of 35 she was imprisoned, where she stayed until her death at age 75. (1590-1665)
Immodest Acts by Judith C. Brown

Exposure cont. from p. 1
back. There is a huge black Cadillac outside, and a man inside who acts like he owns the place. Perhaps he does. I don't remember his race. Hitchhikers outside. An old couple, they live up the road, if we bring them there we can take pictures. The man does not speak English. That had not occurred to me. The woman speaks a little English, she stayed with her daughter once. Her daughter is married, lives in Cleveland. Where are we from? Boston. Is that near Cleveland? No, that's not really near Cleveland. They have a Hogan too. John admires it. The man is proud of it, they saved for a long time to build it. The woman translates. She leads us over to a small lean-to where she picks up a tiny black lamb for us to admire. I photograph the two of them, the woman has the lamb in her arms. They are not smiling. My photography professor does not like this picture. (He knows which way to hold it, it is banal.) He tells me their expressions are uninteresting. He advises me not to use it in my portfolio. I don't. I got an A.

Between Canyon de Chelly and Gallup is a long drive. In a town we see



an adobe stable with graffiti. It says something about white corporations hating Navajo people. Don't trust them, it tells you, I don't remember the words. I agree, I am a little happier, up from the

depression which sank in when we left the couple at Canyon de Chelly. I didn't wonder until much later why it was in English.

We are rushing to get off the res-

ervation. I no longer have mud on my clothes. I washed it off my body last night in a shower in a motel. There are no magical springs on the reservation, at least not for us. That is as it should be, we are leaving now. We are on our way home. I have my pictures. They are not developed yet. Silver congeals on plastic to form varying shades of gray, based on light meeting unexposed film through a lens for a split second. I will go home and use chemicals: wash, agitate, wash. My home is on Indian land, stolen, but I cannot go back to Ireland, England, and Scotland. I am an American, but my existence on this land rests on the backs of others. The photos on my film were not of brown sisters, I am no radical friend. They were not smiling, and with good reason. The chasm between us was as deep and wide as the Canyon de Chelly, as the Atlantic ocean. As cold and as empty. My task now may be to cross it, I don't know. I have to develop. Wash, agitate, wash.

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Dykes To Watch Out For

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Window

By Jade Murray (a pen name for a local writer)

I'm a child about 6 years old at my grandmother's house in Corsicana, Texas. In the living room, I'm standing on the badly stained loveseat staring out of the front room window. It is without a curtain or a window screen and the glass is badly in need of some Windex. Staring outside, I see the unpaved, potholed street and children wandering aimlessly up and down it. My grandparents' house has furniture only because the movers who were to repossess the stuff didn't realize two things. First, that the furniture was not worth hauling onto their truck; and secondly, that they were not prepared

for the funk which greeted them at the front door. The house reeks of Lysol and funk. It smells as if the Lysol just gave up the deodorizing task by yielding, "Whew, the fungus is definitely among us!" Ironically, the house is clean but it sure does stink!

Soon my grandfather pulls up in his run-down, blue-colored station wagon - the wheels literally look as if they are about to abandon the car altogether. My grandmother is in the passenger seat fussing as usual about anything.

"Daddy" parks the car on the ungrassed makeshift garage strip, gets out of the car, slams the door, and heads to the house with his usual six-pack of Coors beer. His clothes are stained with

oil and grease and other unknown particles. His body odor smells worse than anything known to the human species. He smells so stinky that when he passes people, their first response is to say out loud, "Oh, Dear!!!!!!!" As soon as he walks into the house, he yells at me, "Git yo' ass out of the window!" I run away into the room that I share with my aunt.

My grandmother slowly comes into the house with her hands full of groceries for the evening meal. She's still cussing about whatever with her lips moving about a hundred miles an hour. I come into the kitchen to help her only to be yelled at. "Git away from the kitchen, Child. I cain't do nothing with y'all kids in here!" I dash back into my aunt's room.

In the room, I turn on the radio and pull up a chair to look out the back window. My thoughts focus on how much I hate it here knowing that there is no other

place to go. Where is my mother? Is she still living in Dallas? Maybe she's dead? Why won't she take me away from here? Thinking such thoughts about my mother and her whereabouts makes me so sad. I get down from the chair and turn to the window inside of me. I think about being in another place with a loving mother and father who hug and kiss me. My 'imaginary' home is beautiful and clean with the scent of fresh flowers everywhere.

The smell of food brings me out of my trance. Another night of cornbread and beans mixed with hamburger meat. I eat in silence as my uncles scurry to the table as if it was their last meal. Their actions prompt me to think about climbing out of the kitchen window in search of my 'imaginary' place.

cont. from page 4

until we drop dead. In a strange way this incident seems humorous to me even though I know the guys are serious about forcing sex on us.

After 15 minutes of hard resistance, Richard yells, "Both of you Bitches get the fuck out of my car!" I proudly responded, "Gladly! C'mon Neicy, we can walk home!" Outside of the car, Neicy and I are bewildered as we try to piece the whole experience together. Mark refuses to give her back her underpants and shorts forcing her to walk around stretching her t-shirt to cover the most

private part. If it wasn't so serious a scene, I would be roaring in laughter. The boys zoom off calling us such names like "sluts" and "strags". (Lord knows what they would have called us if we had acquiesced). As we are walking the long, scary, dark road towards town, we are trying to conceal our fright. We will undoubtedly be yelled at and I'm sure I'll be hit by my mother and called even worse names by my mother's husband. Neicy's mother is sure to forbid her from seeing me. Yet we talk and talk about every-

thing from television programs, movie stars, the type of jobs that we will have when we grow up - anything to escape the present situation.

At 9:30 pm or so, we finally make it to town, only 15 or 20 more minutes from our homes. We see a car from behind us, maybe it is someone who can give us a ride. It's the same guys; this time they don't stop - they only discard Neicy's underpants and shorts. We walk back into our dead neighborhoods with more of a vengeance to leave the town as soon

as we come of age. Still there is the realization that as soon as we enter our respective homes, everyone will rise from the dead to yell, curse, and scream at us. There is no doubt in our minds - our only choice for us to have a normal [sic] adult life is to leave Corsicana or we'll end up remaining here to die with our dreams.

As we approach my front door, I turn to Neicy to finally acknowledge what has happened. I ask, "Why Neicy? Why are those guys like that?" Responding typically, she says, "Because they aren't 'Starsky & Hutch'!"

TWO A.M.

A fearful wail
pierces the black, peaceful night.
A poisoned dart aimed
directly at my head,
leaving no choice
but to answer the desperate cry.

I am weary
and my weariness makes me clumsy.
Lumpy form stumbling through the night.
I must attend to needs
alien from my own,
yet ones I have learned to address
to perfection.

I grope in the dark—
a now-familiar medium—
and lee you there.
Luminous star
radiating blue-white light
to guide me through my
tender ministrations.

Again peace
regains its place—
an unbroken tract of night
lies ahead.

—Lisa Bates
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Dykes To Watch Out For



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Western Mass Child Care Services, Inc. announces an emergency placement service to assist parents whose children have lost day care due to recent closings of some local centers. WMCCS is a non-profit agency serving low-income and minority residents of the Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee area. WMCCS is offering a *Summer Lifeline Program* for children ages 7-12. For more information, call Carol Lee at (413) 533-7290.

LIFELINE COUNSELING CENTER-GROUP OFFERINGS: Coming Out group for Lesbians, meets Wednesday evenings. Lesbian Therapy group, general, ongoing group, meets Tuesday evenings in Amherst. Alcohol and Drug Early Recovery Group for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals meets Mondays. For more info call 253-2822.

SLIDE SHOW Sat. Aug. 10, 7:30 pm, "Goddesses of the feast, Dance, & Celebration," a slideshow and discussion by Willow LaMonte at the Touchstone Farm & Yoga Center Easthampton. For information call 628-4543.

Everywoman's Center summer counseling hours are walk-in: Thursdays 12:00-1:00pm, call-in hours: Monday and Thursdays 10:00-11:00am, and Tuesdays 12:00-1:00 pm. Counseling sessions are available by appointment, as well. The Everywoman's Center is located in Wilder Hall, UMass. Telephone number is (413) 545-0883.

The Pioneer Valley Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Youth Project, a new group in the tri-county region announce the start

of a new service for area teens. Professionally facilitated meetings will be held on a weekly basis in Northampton. Teenagers (19 and under) who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or who are questioning their orientation and would like to meet with others to exchange ideas. For more info call (413) 586-7377.

Sacred/Circle Dance-New and old circle and line dances from the folk traditions of Europe, with emphasis on the spirit of the dance and the harmony of the circle. Everyone is welcome, and no partners are needed. Every Wednesday from 7:30-9:30 pm, Munson Hall, South Amherst. Donation \$5.00. For more info call Janet at 586-3267.

Riverside Writing Workshop for Women. Wednesday evening workshops. Retreats: on the first Saturday of August. Led by poet Margaret Robison. Sponsored by Amherst Writers & Artists. For more info call 413-625-9450.

Alternatives to Violence in the Middle East: Many Faces, Many Problems. At 7:30 in Northampton. July 17-*The Importance of Islam in the Region*. July 24-*The Economy of the Region-Oil and Arms*. July 31-*The Role of the U.S.-What should it be*. August 7-*Israeli Perspectives and History of Negotiations*. For more info contact: American Friends Service Committee 584-8975.

THE SIXTH ANNUAL WOMYN & WITCHCRAFT: DEVELOPING DIANIC WICCA CONFERENCE will be held August 29th-September 1st 1991 in

central Wisconsin. Registration is \$150. before 8/1, \$175. thereafter. Sponsored by the Re-formed Congregation of the Goddess. For A brochure call (608) 838-8629 or write: DDW6, c/o RCG, PO Box 6021, Madison, WI 53716, USA.

The 11th NEWMR Women's Music Festival, August 30-September 2 (Labor Day Weekend) For more info send SASE to NEWMR PO Box 217, New Haven CT 06513. Or call (203) 468-8505.

Tibetan U.S. Resettlement Project/Amherst is looking for sponsors, job opportunities and financial assistance for 50 Tibetan newcomers in the fall of '91. For more info contact Jedd Miller at 549-2802.

Administrative Internship w/ Everywoman's Songbook. Assist Everywoman's Songbook coordinator with book and concert production, publicity, marketing fundraising, for 10-20 hours per week for one or two semesters. Excellent opportunity for students with interest in music publishing, arts management, marketing, issues of violence against women. Contact: Donna Hebert, Everywoman's Songbook Coordinator, Nelson House, UMass. 253-4058 or 545-883.

Second Annual Northampton/Amherst Lesbian Festival. Saturday August 3rd at UMass/Amherst 10 am-7 pm. For more info call Andi at 586-5679. The event is ASL interpreted and wheelchair accessible. Childcare is provided.

Valley Gay Alliance meets on the first and third Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Unitarian Church Meeting House in Northampton.

1991 "Arts in the Park" series at Pulaski Park begins Thursday, July 25th from 5-7 pm. Featured is folksinger Roger Ticknell, mime Marck Morrison and traditional Irish music with Sheila and Don Healy. Admission is free. For more info call 584-7327

Art Opening and Reception for C.J. Jennings at Lunaria. August 4th. at 2:30 p.m. For more information call 586-7851.

Kelly Willis and Radio Ranch at the Ironhorse Aug. 6th-7 & 9 pm. August 24-*Two Nice Girls* 7 & 9 pm. August 27th *Koko Taylor & her Blues Machine*. 7:00 PM.

Black Diamond Productions Presents the **SUNSET CONCERT SERIES** at the Provincetown Town Hall July 26, 27 and 28 at 7:30 pm. Advance tickets are \$12.00, day of are \$13.00. Festival passes available by mail order only \$30.00 +.50 handling fee. Send money order and SASE to P.O. Box 199, Ipswich, MA 01938. To charge by phone call (617) 641-2131. Performers will be VICCHESNUTT, THE HARD SOUL POETS MELISSA FERRICK AND DENISE MCDUFFIE-BENTLEY on July 26th. BETTY, M'LISS, BROOKS WILLIAMS AND PATTI GRIFFIN. on July 27th. On July 28th it will be KSENIA MACK and CHRIS DIPINTO, and a special mystery headliner. Proceeds are going to Greenpeace and the Multi-Cultural Aids Coalition.

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Women in the Trades Potluck will be held August 10th at one pm at 286 College Highway (Rt. 10) Southampton. Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of every month at Roberto's in Northampton. Call Sadie at 527-8357 or at 781-6950 for more info.

NEWMR- North East Women's Musical Retreat! August 30- September 2 1991 in Hardwick MA. See our ad in this issue for more information.

INDIGO- The Club for Women in Cambridge is seeking artists to present their work in The Gallery at Indigo. If you are interested please contact Cyndie Barone at (617) 884-5540 for additional information. Women of color strongly encouraged to apply.

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